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the /aoros and nuros are preferred most of all, on account of both the water content of the flesh and the food value of the kernel. The Topnaars in the vicinity of Walvis Bay still live for a considerable part of the year almost exclusively on the /aoros, and hence are often known by the tribal name of /Naroasis. 222 252 262

All the food obtained is generally shared in common. If game is brought home, the whole camp gathers about the hut of the possessor till all the meat is consumed, and so too with everything else. Even to-day in South-West Africa if a Nama has anything to eat, e.g. a piece of meat or bread, he is bound by old custom to share it with anyone coming up to him. Failure to do so would expose him to the greatest contempt. The communal meal, as we shall see, is one of the outstanding features in the ceremonial life of the people; while in ordinary life their hospitality is so generous and far-reaching that their economic system has in consequence been termed by several writers a sort of communism. 264 [262] 574

There is as a rule no fixed time for eating. Only the morning meal, taken after the cows have been milked and driven out to pasture, has a special name, *soloa*. The time and place of the other meals are regulated according to circumstance: in camp by the return of the herds from pasture, on the march by outspans, on the hunt by a successful shot, and so on. The preparation of meals is the task of the women, and generally each woman prepares the food for her family on the fire in the hut. Normally both men and women now eat together, each family by itself, but there are certain communal meals in which the sexes are strictly separated or in which only the members of one sex may take part. According to Kolb, however, men and women among the Cape Hottentots always ate apart, all the people of each sex eating together. This separation of the sexes at meals he attributes to the fear that one of the women might be menstruating, and would thus contaminate any man associating with her or coming near her.[1] There is evidence also, as we shall see in discussing the boys' puberty ceremonies, that among the Namas the men at least formerly ate together and apart from their wives. 264 [462] [184] [341 783]

There is little information as to the existence of food taboos among the Hottentots in more recent times. The only well-authenticated instance is in the case of the hare, which in all the tribes might be eaten only by women and children, and was strictly forbidden to men 262 761

[1] Op. cit., [illegible].

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606 various services. He also has to treat his wife's mother with the greatest deference. They are said to be "shy", *ses*, of each other, and he may never look at her when addressing her. In the presence
607 of his wife's brothers also he has to be restrained; he may not, e.g.
587 be quarrelsome, nor may he beat his children and cause them to cry. To his wife's sisters, however, he behaves, according to Mrs. Hoernlé, "much as he would to his wife, and even at the present day intercourse with them is common, if they are unmarried or widowed." A woman, again, "considered her husband's younger brothers as her husbands, and used in the old days to be inherited by one of them." Even now it is customary that after the death of a man his brother takes the widow into his hut, unless she already has grown-up sons and is sufficiently well-to-do to manage her household without assistance.[1]

Remarriage Ceremonies

587 The survivor of a marriage, whether man or woman, is not permitted to remarry until at least a full year has elapsed since the death of the other partner.[2] At the new marriage ceremony, whether a widow marries a young man, a widower a young woman, or even a widow a widower, great ritual precautions are necessary, and an elaborate ceremonial is performed. The details of this custom have been carefully recorded by Mrs. Hoernlé.[3]

587 Following upon the regular marriage feast, she says, a special
● 783 remarriage feast is held. For this a special animal is killed, if possible
784 a sheep, otherwise a goat. The bride and bridegroom enter the new hut specially built for them, seat themselves on a skin on the floor, and await proceedings. They are now in the peculiar state known to the Hottentots as */nam*, during which they are not only themselves in an extremely precarious condition, but are also a source of danger to all other people who have not undergone the same ceremony. Great harm might easily come to them, so that the people of their clan (*sic*) see to it that no one dangerous enters the hut; still less would

[1] Hoernlé, op. cit., 23; Schrader, op. cit., 322 sq.; Kolbe, op. cit., 245. The statement of the Swedish naturalist Thunberg, who visited the Cape in 1772, that Hottentot men, when more than 8 years older, leaving behind him a wife and children, it is also duty of his eldest surviving brother to take the woman to wife and to bring up her children as his own; but if she has sufficient means to support herself and her children, the brother has the right to decide whether he will have her or not. ("Reppore non dan . . . Hanno High Tellough," 77.)

[2] Kolbe, op. cit., 240.

[3] "Certain Rites of Transition and the Conception of Inua among the Hottentots," *Harvard African Studies*, 8 (1924), 77-9.

anyone who had not himself undergone the ceremony dare to intrude there.

The special animal slaughtered is brought into the hut and skinned there by the old woman attending on the couple. She must herself be a widow who has been remarried, and must further be no relative of either bride or bridegroom. No portion of the animal must leave the hut. A deep hole is made near the hearth fire, which has also become /aas, and into this hole are thrown the contents of the stomach and the small intestines. Any blood spilled during the skinning must also drop into the hole, which is then filled up and must not be interfered with. The skin of the animal is given to the old woman for her own use; no one else would dare to use it. Once skinned, the animal is cut up, and every scrap of it then cooked, the heart, liver, and other internal organs together with the blood in one pot, the flesh in one or more other pots.

While the meat is cooking, the actual ceremony takes place. The old woman takes a knife (formerly a sharp piece of quartz would always have been used), and cuts both husband and wife first in front, two large gashes in the groin, one on each side, and afterwards behind, two gashes in the sacral region. With a small horn she then cups blood from these cuts, mixes it together, and adds some of the blood of the slaughtered animal. Next she scrapes some dirt from her arm and mixes it with the blood. Finally she rubs the mixture into all the cuts and bumps the two people together so that their blood mingles. They are then considered duly initiated into the ranks of the twice wed.

After this ceremony, the guests coming in to greet the couple give them beads or bracelets or other similar small gifts. The meat of the animal is now ready, and may be eaten by anyone who has previously undergone the same ceremony. Pregnant or menstruating women and their husbands may, however, not come into the hut, otherwise the efficacy of the cutting is lost; while if any unqualified person were to eat of the meat he would die.

Until the wounds are healed, the couple remain /aas, and may not touch either water or the pots, nor go among the animals. The old woman remains to cook for them outside the hut. When at last the cuts have healed, the man and wife are ceremonially cleansed by the old woman. She smears a mixture of moist cowdung and /naup (red mineral powder mixed with fat) all over their bodies, allows it to dry slightly, and then with the palm of her hand rolls it off in small balls.

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587 off in handfuls. A complete change of clothing must also be made, and the old woman alone is at liberty to use the old sets.

783 Next the couple are reintroduced to the ordinary tasks of daily
784 life from which they have hitherto been cut off. The wife is taken to milk a cow, the old woman supporting her arm as she does so. Then a visit is paid to the waterhole, where the wife is sprinkled with water and her arms and legs rubbed with mud by the old woman, who also fills her water pot for her. The wife is also reintroduced to cooking. Some meat is cooked on the fire in the hut, which has not been used for this purpose since the day of the ceremonial cutting. The old woman supports her arm while she stirs the contents of the pot, then helps her to lift the pot from the fire. The fire is then removed and a new one kindled. Finally the wife goes to gather wood, again with the assistance of the old woman. From now on she is again free to pursue these normal tasks of her daily life.

The husband has to be reintroduced not only to water but also to the cattle kraal. The night before this takes place some branches of the tamarisk and acacia trees are soaked in water. This water he takes the next day, and with it sprinkles the cattle and sheep. After that he also is free to go about his duties as usual.

The Conception of */nau*

783 This ceremony is a typical example of the many "transition
784 rites" found in Hottentot life, and its details can best be understood against the background of the elements common to all these ceremonies.[1] All periods of crisis in the life of a Hottentot involve his separation from his usual surroundings, his preparation for a new group in society, and, finally, his reception into this group. A person in such a crisis is exposed to danger on every side; he must retire from contact with other people, and take special care of himself. But he is also a danger to other people, and more especially to the animals and other living things upon which the community depends for its livelihood. Hence he is secluded, and must abstain scrupulously from his usual tasks.

Such a person is said to be */nau*. It is essential that he be initiated, as it were, with the least possible delay into that group of his people

[1] The following description is taken almost verbatim from the analysis made by Mrs. Hoernlé in her important paper, "The Conception of Inau among the Hottentots," pp. 67–9. These rites are also referred to, under the name "ondersnaeden" (i.e. "circumcision") by Kolb, *Vergelykye der Groote Hoffnung*, 55 sqq., and by Wikar, "Berigt aan den Heere van Pierneberg," 93–4, but their accounts are far less comprehensive.

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already possessing the new characteristic he has acquired, in order that he may have a normal place in the community once more. Since, however, a */nau* person may work untold mischief on anyone dealing with him, who might also become */nau*, only persons who have passed through all the stresses and strains of human life, and no longer fear anything, are qualified to deal with him. None but very old men, and women past the age of childbearing, satisfy this condition; they alone can be called upon to restore the */nau* person to the community. But not any old man or old woman will do; it must be one having the same characteristic as the */nau* person. Only a widowed person can safely deal with one */nau* by the recent loss of husband or wife. Only one who has had a given disease and been cured of it is fit to officiate for a sufferer from that disease, and preferably someone is selected for this task who, besides the other necessary qualifications, has had an extremely bad attack of the disease—the worse the better.

Seclusion or separation of some kind occurs in all cases, but the method of "initiation" varies according as the crisis is one of two kinds. In childbirth, marriage, puberty, or bereavement rites, the new status has simply to be recognized, acknowledged, and the necessary steps taken to protect both the individual and society by receiving the man or woman into the new group to which he or she now belongs. This is done by the preparation of a sacramental meal in which only persons duly qualified are allowed to share. In the other group of crises—remarriage, boys' puberty ceremonies, reception into the rank of hunters, treatment of diseases regarded as */nau*, etc.—a stage preliminary to the sacramental meal is necessary. The */nau* person has first to be identified with the new group by injecting some of the "essence" of that group into him. This is done by making incisions in some part of his body, the part varying with the crisis, and injecting a concoction of which one part is invariably some of the grease and dirt scraped from the body of the officiating person.

Next follows a period, more or less prolonged, of complete seclusion. During this time certain other things become */nau* in relation to the */nau* person. First of all there is the fire in the hut in which he is secluded. This fire must never be allowed to go out, nor must the ashes be removed until the day comes for the purification of the hut and the renewal of the fire. During all this time, moreover, nothing must be cooked at the fire, nor must anyone come near it who

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might increase the peril in which the *!nau* person finds himself. Thus pregnant or menstruating women are always excluded from the hut. All these precautions seem to show that it is the patient's safety that is bound up with the fire. The *!nau* fire must be respected, not because other persons may suffer from the breach of the regulations, but because the patient will suffer therefrom. Raw meat and cold water, again, are sources of great danger to a *!nau* person, and must be kept away from him. It does not seem as if the water itself ever becomes *!nau*, but every *!nau* person has to be carefully protected from it, and reintroduced to it with much ceremony once the period of seclusion is over. The clothing and utensils of the *!nau* person also become *!nau*, but they are a source of danger to others than himself—theirs is the peril if they inadvertently make use of these things before he finally discards them and gives them to the person taking care of him.

The period of seclusion is brought to a close by a renunciation of all that represents the old life—the person, as Mrs. Hoernlé expresses it, must be reborn. There is first a special cleansing of his body by the individual officiating. Then a totally new set of clothing is put on. The old clothes should be used only by the officiating person or someone else of the same group, though the tendency nowadays is to keep most of them for rough use. At the same time the hut is thoroughly purified, and what might be called an "expiatory" meal is eaten. For this meal but one animal is killed, and of it none but the *!nau* person and persons who can no longer become *!nau* may partake. Finally there is the careful reintroduction to all the familiar daily tasks so long laid aside, "and so life begins again with all the solidarity of the new group behind its new member."[1]

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[1] It will be noticed from this description that the conception of *!nau* also applies to the ordinary marriage ceremonies. Unfortunately the data on which Mrs. Hoernlé bases her statement have not yet been published. It is possible, however, to find some confirmation for it in certain of the details recorded by earlier observers, fragmentary though their accounts appear when considered in the light of the analysis given above. Thus Wikar, as we have noted, explicitly mentions the sacramental meal in which only the bride and women already married may take part; and, indeed, in his remarks generally about these transition rites (*andersmaken*, as he terms them), he emphasizes the fact that a meal is held in which only the "patient" and those who have previously undergone the rite may participate. The statement by both Graevenbroeck and Kolb that men and women eat apart at the marriage feast also points in the same direction, although this is by no means clear from their descriptions. Graevenbroeck further mentions the ceremonial cleansing of the young couple, and Kolb's description of the urination may possibly also be interpreted in this light. None of the accounts, however, even hints at any period of seclusion, nor at anything which can be regarded as a reintroduction of the young couple to the normal tasks of daily life.

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852 source of water. It seems also that the mother is ceremonially reintroduced to water in the same way as in the remarriage ceremony, except that here it is the older women who have looked after her during her confinement who free her from all her restrictions.[1]

844 184 Kolb's description of the birth customs among the Cape Hottentots agrees in the main with that given above for the Naman, but contains a few additional details.[2] When the time for delivery is at hand, the patient is assisted by two or three of her near female relatives, as well as by the midwife of the kraal, who is specially summoned. As soon as the latter enters the hut the husband must leave it, and may not enter again until the birth is over. Should he do so, he becomes "unclean", and must purify himself by slaughtering a sheep for a special cleansing meal in which the other men of the kraal take part.

845 757 If the birth goes easily, all is well. When, however, it is unusually protracted, the women make a decoction of finely cut tobacco and cow's milk, or, where the latter is not available, sheep's milk; strain it, and allow the milk to cool. It is then handed to the patient to drink, in the belief that it will increase the pain and thus lead to a speedy delivery, or else cause strong vomiting which at the same time expels 844 the child. The new-born baby may not be cleaned with water, which they say is "unhealthy". Instead it is rubbed all over with moist cowdung; when this has dried and fallen off, the baby is washed in 828 the juice of the Hottentot fig (*Mesembrianthemum edule*), which will make it nimble and fleet of foot; then smeared all over with freshly-melted sheep fat or butter, and finally powdered with *buchu*.

The afterbirth is buried in a hole in the ground, together with the blood flowing from the woman. This is all collected on the skin upon which she has lain from the beginning, and on which she must continue to lie as long as the blood flows from her. When the flow ceases, and the woman can or may arise, the skin is wrapped up together with the blood, etc., upon it, and is buried, so that no sorcerer may get at it and use it to work evil magic. The umbilical cord is 846 bound with a piece of sheep's sinew until it falls off; there is no mention of any special usage connected with it.

Before meeting again after the birth, husband and wife must both rub their bodies down anew with cowdung, smear themselves with

[1] Hoernlé, "The Social Value of Water among the Naman," *S. Afr. J. Sci.*, xx (1923), 514, 523–6.

[2] *Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung*, 64–6; cf. Germann, "Bilder aus der sexuellen Ethnologie der Hottentotten," *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft*, xii, 324–6; Graevenbroeck, "Uit den Ouden Tijd," 2–4 *passim*.

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fat, and powder themselves with *buchu*. When the husband then enters the hut, he must first smoke a pipe of dagga, and not till the effects of this have worn off may he speak to his wife and again sleep in his hut.

Graevenbroeck adds the information that the woman, after the birth, must remain in her hut for at least eight days. When this period of seclusion is over, she is ceremonially washed from tip to toe in warm water, if it is winter, or in cold water if it is summer. Only then is she allowed to leave the hut. During this washing men may not be present. A feast is then held, in which blood relatives and friends participate. The birth of the first child, according to Kolb, is celebrated far more lavishly than are subsequent births, especially if it is a boy, when all the inhabitants of the kraal join in the feast.

The descriptions given above are almost certainly inadequate. But they contain sufficient detail to show that the ritual accompanying birth has at least some of the elements found in the other Hottentot "transition rites". The seclusion of the mother, her avoidance of cold water, and the observances relating to the fire during the period of seclusion, the fact that her husband becomes unclean if he enters the hut, and finally her ceremonial reintroduction to the use of water, as well as the first introduction of the baby to the source of water—all these, as we have seen, are essential details in all ceremonies associated with the conception of *!nau*. From Mrs. Hoernlé's general analysis of these ceremonies we should expect to find also a sacramental meal in which only the new mother and other women who have borne children take part; but, although mention is made of a feast to celebrate the birth, in none of the descriptions available of the birth ceremonies is there any record of this special meal. Wikar, however, explicitly mentions it in his general account of the occasions on which women alone may take part in the *andersmaken* feasts.[1] He gives no description of the birth customs; and Mrs. Hoernlé's own data on the birth ceremonial have unfortunately also not yet been published.

Abnormal Births

Children born with a caul are credited with prophetic powers. Such a child, according to one of Mrs. Hoernlé's informants, might become a clever *!gei aob* (magician) if given the caul to eat as a child;

[1] Op. cit., 54.

881 Immediately she is in the hut, her relations commence slaughtering
574 animals to provide in her honour the feast known as *kharu ǂap*, "menstruation killing." All her nearer relatives contribute to this killing, even her older married brothers, if she has any. Everything slaughtered must be female, and above all a heifer must be provided. The entrails, pluck, etc., of these animals must on no account be eaten by any relative, either maternal or paternal, of the girl. The visiting friends enjoy them. This *kharu ǂap* is the great feast for the women, all who have already passed through the puberty rites being able to
[841] take part in it. The only exceptions to this rule are that no menstruating
[843] woman may eat of the meat, "lest the girl's period never stop," nor any pregnant woman, "lest the girl's period stop never to return." No man or boy either was formerly supposed to take any part at all in the feast, but nowadays, owing to the extreme poverty of the people, males are allowed to share the meat of all but one of the first animals killed. The women cook and eat the meat outside the hut, while the *aba tarás* takes her share, always part of the outer flesh, inside. The girl and her friends remain in the *kharu oms*, drinking plenty of milk and eating all the meat they can. As the time of her seclusion draws to a close, the feasting takes on bigger proportions,
[535] regulated always of course by the relatives. The young people of the kraal begin practising the reed dance, and the girl's friends, both male and female, play and dance round the hut in which she is confined.
881 Then, at last, the day before she is to come out, a long series of
783 purification rites takes place.

First, during the day, the *aba tarás* enters the girl's enclosure, and cleanses her of all her *axa /uip*, child dirt. This is very thoroughly done with melted butter and moist cowdung, every inch of the girl's body being well scoured. The *aba tarás* smears the salve all over the body of the girl, and after allowing it to dry slightly rolls it off again with the palm of her hand. She then collects it carefully, and hides it in an ant-heap or animal's hole when no one is looking. The girl is now given a complete set of new clothing, the old woman carrying
[291] off the discarded one. In former days it was at this time that the girl changed her maiden's apron for the full woman's dress; hence these puberty rites are sometimes referred to as the *broek-kaross slagt*, from the Dutch term *broek-kaross* (lit. breeches-kaross) applied to the woman's rear apron. Next the girl is led into the outer hut by the *aba tarás*, with whom she prepares a meal for the other women assembled to meet her. Nowadays she prepares tea or coffee, but

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formerly a ewe was specially slaughtered for the occasion. This cooking is the first done on the fire since the girl entered the *kharu oms*. The *aba tarás* must hold her hand as she takes the pot, and aid her with everything she does. Soot from the pot is put on her forehead, and together the old woman and she eat a piece of meat prepared apart from the rest. So she is made free to cook and prepare a meal once more.[1] Then the *aba tarás* takes the fire, ashes and all, and dumps it far from the hut. She next sprinkles fresh sand on the hearth, and lays a new fire, which must not be lit from another, as is usually done when a fire goes out, but with flint or matches; originally no doubt the firesticks would have been used. The fire thus lit is no longer */nau*.

The girl is now ready to receive visitors as an *oaxais*, a young marriageable woman. All her relatives and friends pour in, each with some present of beads, or earrings, or other finery. A great deal of this is only lent, and is returned later. The girl shines with clean, well-greased skin, she is scented all over with the *buchu* she and her friends have ground, her face is painted in various curious patterns with red and white mineral powder mixed with fat, and her body is loaded with the presents. Then the young boys, even up to sixteen years of age and more, come into the hut from which they have hitherto been excluded, and go up to the newly-made *oaxais*. She takes her "powder-puff" full of *buchu*, and with it rubs each of them on his testicles. This ensures fertility and is a protection against sexual diseases. This particular rite seems to be dying out, and nowadays is accounted for by the saying that until the boys have been rubbed in this way it is too dangerous for them to eat any of the meat prepared for the girl. In consequence the younger boys especially go in eagerly, so that they may join in the feast!

The feasting reaches its climax this day. Female animals, both ewes and heifers, are killed, cooked, and eaten, and everybody, men and women, boys and girls alike, joins in this "feast of rejoicing". Hahn states that when the relatives appear for this final feast, the girl's nearest male relative (usually the eldest unmarried cousin) takes the fat of one of the heifers, hangs it over her head, and wishes that she

[1] The description of this part of the ceremony is taken from the version given by Mrs. Hoernlé in her more recent account ("Social Value of Water," 524). In the earlier version ("Conception of Isaas," 72), she says that the cleansing of the girl and the change of clothing is made in front of the *!nau* fire, i.e. in the outer hut, and goes on to say: "Meanwhile, a ewe has been slaughtered, and one of the hind legs is given to the *aba tarás*. This she must now cook on the fire in the house. . . When the meat is cooked, it is eaten by the *aba tarás* and other women who, like her, are past childbearing. No one else touches it."

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881 574 may be as fruitful as a young cow and have many children. The other friends repeat the wish.[1]

881 535 Towards evening the girl's friends enter the hut to fetch her out, and for the last time she must leave it by the special opening made for her at the back. Her friends surround her, and for a time try to keep her from the view of the youths, for she is very shy. The youths now start the reed dance, forming the inner ring, while the girls, with the *oaxais* in their midst, dance round them in an outer ring. Every now and then there is a change of partners, and gradually the youths get to the side of the girl and choose her as partner, till [777] in the end her shyness has all gone. During the dancing she throws *buchu* over the men and boys as she sees them; this is supposed to bring good luck. The dancing often lasts through the night, and when it is over the final round of rites begins, reintroducing the girl to her daily tasks, "freeing her, as it were," says Mrs. Hoernlé, "from the spell under which she has hung."

881 Early on the following morning she is led out of her hut by the *aba tarás*, accompanied by her girl and boy friends. She is conducted round the kraal, and as she goes along picks up earth from the cattle-folds and strews it about, plucks twigs and blossoms from the various trees and bushes she passes by, and also scatters *buchu* as she goes. Every male thing, too, she touches, be it ram, calf, or man, as well as the milking vessels in the huts. The explanation given for this was that such a young girl brings fertility to all she touches, and that the day after she had come out of her hut it was sure to rain and there would be plenty in the land.[2] Next she milks a cow, if possible a young [784] cow calving for the first time, the *aba tarás* supporting her arm as she does so. This milk is */nau*, to be drunk only by the old woman herself or others of her age. Once this milking has taken place, the girl can resume her milking duties with impunity.

881 Similarly she is reintroduced to all her other daily tasks by the *aba tarás*. They gather wood together, collect roots and berries 783 together in the veld, and so on. Finally, towards evening, when the usual time comes for getting the household supply of water, they go together, accompanied by all the old women of the kraal, to the water-hole. Here the *aba tarás* takes wet mud from the water and rubs it on the girl's legs, then with a branch in her hand splashes water over the girl. Finally both of them take hold of the branch and strike the

[1] "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 307, quoted by Hoernlé; cf. Wikar, op. cit., 100.
[2] Cf. also Hoernlé, *Richtersveld*, 17; Alexander, loc. cit.

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water. The *aba tarás* then fills the girl's water-pot and her own, puts the former on the girl's head, and the procession returns home. The girl is now free to use water whenever she likes, except when she is menstruating.

In addition to this rite of reintroduction to water there is, according to Hahn, another rite to be performed before the girl is finally free from the restrictions imposed upon her. She must run about quite naked in the first thunderstorm coming on after her festival, so that the rain pours down and washes her whole body. The belief is that this causes her to be fruitful and have many children. He states that he has on three occasions witnessed this running in the rain, when the roaring of the thunder was deafening and the whole sky appeared to be one continual flash of lightning.[1]

With these final rites of aggregation the ceremony is at an end. The girl is able once more to take part in the routine life of the community, only now she is regarded as ready for marriage. During her subsequent periods, however, she is again */nau*, and although there is apparently no feasting or special seclusion, she must observe the same injunctions as when she first menstruates. Thus she may not enter the cattle-fold, let alone milk; it is believed that if she does milk a cow, its milk will turn to blood. Similarly, if she cooks a meal, those who eat it, especially men, will be very ill. Above all she must avoid cold water, for, as Mrs. Hoernlé points out, there is this great difference between most things a menstruating woman is forbidden to do, and the touching of cold water—cold water she can never harm, it will always harm her, if she uses it when she should not, whereas it is she who pollutes other things that she touches and makes them */nau*. Mrs. Hoernlé records an instance of a woman dying suddenly, whose death was unhesitatingly attributed to the fact that she had her period, yet started to do her mistress's washing in cold water. Other women, again, who had been working for white people, said that they were now sickly and never bore any children, because they had been made to work with cold water when they should not have done so.[2]

Nowadays the Naman find it very inconvenient to have their women incapacitated so often and unable to attend to their daily tasks, and Mrs. Hoernlé goes on to say they have discovered that for most women it is quite safe to do these tasks, except that they must

[1] *Tsuni-//Goam*, 87 (also quoted by Hoernlé); cf. Schinz, loc. cit.
[2] "Social Value of Water," 524–5.

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not touch cold water. It is only certain women who are said to be */khai /na*, forbidden or dangerous, who cannot do these things; and a sure way of finding out is to take a woman along the seashore when first she menstruates. The sea, as the greatest accumulation of cold water, is very dangerous for people in an unstable condition. If the woman is */khai /na*, it will rush in towards her, and she will have to take great care not to be drawn in. The woman to whom this happens must not dare to do anything during her period, for she would be a danger to all who touched her food or the milk she had milked.[1]

A similar discrimination is implied in Vedder's account of the girls' puberty rites among the inland Naman. During her seclusion, he says, the girl is given fresh cow's milk to drink. This milk must come from a cow that has its first calf. If the cow does not die during the days of the menstruation, or if it does not get ill, the girl is harmless. But if it should die, this is proof that the girl possesses special powers, and she dare not again drink milk from the herd during her period, lest she imperil the animals. The menstrual blood of such a girl, he adds, is looked upon as an effective poison, which, when dry, is rubbed from her clothes and mixed with the food of enemies in order to kill them. The blood of a harmless girl, on the other hand, is used as medicine for sexual diseases amongst men.[2]

Of the girls' puberty rites among the other Hottentot peoples we have no adequate description. That they existed, however, is shown by Barrow's statement that although by his time many of the ancient usages of the Cape and Eastern Hottentots had ceased to exist, "one custom still remained, which seemed to be pretty generally observed: this was that of shaving the heads of young girls as soon as the first symptoms of maturity began to appear; at the same time, all the ornaments worn on the neck, legs, and arms are removed, and the body for once in their life clean washed and scoured; and during the continuance of the periodical symptoms, they are restricted to a milk diet, and not suffered to mix in the company of men."[3]

Kolb, writing nearly a century earlier of the Cape Hottentots, makes no mention at all of any special usages connected with a girl's first period, but refers several times to the fact that menstruating women were to avoid the company of men. A husband, for example, might not have sexual intercourse with his wife during her periods, or even eat with her, otherwise he would become unclean and have to purify himself by slaughtering an ox for an *andersmachen* in which

[1] Ibid., 525. [2] "The Nama," 136. [3] *Travels in S. Africa*, 2nd ed., I, 114.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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he took part with the other men of the kraal. Indeed, any man who touched a menstruating woman or anything belonging to her, or ate together with her or even came near her, was regarded as "extremely defiled", and obliged to purify himself before he could again mix freely with other men. It is to fear of such contamination, as we have seen, that Kolb ascribes the habitual separation of the sexes at meals.[1] Le Vaillant, again, states that among the Gonaqua a menstruating woman would isolate herself at some distance from the rest of the community until her period was over, when, purified by bathing, she could again mix with the people.[2] These descriptions are obviously incomplete, but they serve to show that the conception of *!nau* or taboo attaching to a menstruating woman among the Naman existed also to some degree at least, among the other Hottentot peoples.

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Boys' Puberty Ceremonies

Although the Hottentots no longer observe any special rites connected with the attainment of maturity by boys, there is evidence enough in the literature that such rites existed in the past. Like the other Hottentot transition rites, they involved, among the Naman at least, a period of seclusion, with all its accompanying restrictions and final reintroduction to the incidents of ordinary life. But they also embodied a definite course of instruction, in which certain customary usages and laws peculiarly applicable to men were impressed upon the initiates. These rites seem to have been essentially of an individual character, in that as a rule only one boy at a time was subjected to them. On occasion perhaps three or four boys might be found undergoing them simultaneously, but this was by no means regular or necessary. In this respect among others, therefore, the Hottentot puberty rites for boys differed fundamentally from those of the North-Western Bushmen, where, as we have seen, there must always be a group of boys being initiated together.

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No man was allowed to marry until he had passed through these rites. They served directly to initiate him into the ranks of mature men, and above all conferred upon him the privilege of habitually associating, eating, and smoking with these men. Boys who had not undergone the rites ate only with the women, and were regarded as milksops. It is upon this aspect of the rites that Kolb lays emphasis

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[1] Op. cit., 102–3 and *passim*; cf. (English trans.) *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, i, 147, 206–7.
[2] *Voyage dans l'Afrique*, ii, 42.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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881 in describing them as they existed in his time among the Cape
885 Hottentots. Until, he says, the boy is initiated, generally in about his eighteenth year, he must remain under the direct control of his mother and associate with the women at meals; he may not eat even with his father, let alone set himself up as a man. When at last his father, or the men as a whole, resolve to receive him into their company, all the inhabitants of the kraal assemble in the open space in the middle, where the men sit down in a circle. The initiate, smeared all over with fat and soot, squats down beyond them. The oldest man present then asks the others if they are willing to admit the boy into their ranks; on receiving their acquiescence, he steps up to the boy and informs him that henceforth he is freed from submission to his mother and that he must no longer associate with the women. Then the old man urinates freely over the boy, at the same time wishing him good fortune, fertility, a ripe old age, and similar blessings. This done, all the men feast on a sheep provided by the friends of the boy, and the latter now joins them. He is thus confirmed in the privilege of associating, eating, and drinking with the men, and leaves behind him the reproach of being a milksop. The
[192] word *kutsire*, by which according to Kolb uninitiated boys are derided as being attached to women's company, is equally offensive when hurled at a mature man. He may not rest under it, but his case is
• [783] examined by the men, and if the accusation is upheld he is excluded from their company until he has purified himself by slaughtering a sheep. This the men eat, while he himself receives only the fat and the entrails, which he must cook with the animal's blood and consume.[1]

881 The urination figuring so conspicuously in Kolb's description
514 of this and other ceremonies has been seized upon by many later writers as an instance of romantic falsification. But although there is much in his description of the Cape Hottentots not altogether above suspicion, he is confirmed on this particular point by other reliable authorities. Thus Thunberg, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, says: "The custom is not quite laid aside of making youth, at a certain age, men; from which time they are separated from the women, and associate only with men. After the youth has been besprinkled, according to custom, with urine, some animal is killed, and its omentum, or cawl, is tied about his neck."[2] And Wikar, in describing the boys' puberty ceremonies among the

[1] Op. cit., 59–60. [2] *Travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia*, ii, 42.

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can be little doubt that it merely represents the ceremonial reintroduction of the boy to water, just as in all the other rites of this nature the person undergoing the rite must be reintroduced to water. Campbell's version of the rite is that the entrails of the animal killed at the beginning of the ceremony are dried and pounded to powder, which is mixed with water and then rubbed all over the boy. The latter is then in the presence of the whole kraal declared to be a man.

With this rite the initiation is brought to an end. The boy is now a *doro-aob*, a man allowed to sit at the fire (*doro*) and eat in the company of the other men of the camp. As such he is bound to observe various usages with regard to eating. Some of these have already been noted in Olpp's list of precepts, but he adds a few others. If it happens, for example, that while the meat for the *doro* men is on the fire a dog unexpectedly snatches a piece from it, then all the meat becomes impure, and another animal must be slaughtered. Again, a pot in which hare's flesh has previously been cooked must first be cleaned out with fire before it can be used by the men, and in any case it must not be used if an entirely new pot can be procured. Any man violating these prohibitions, and, for example, eating hare's flesh, whether because of necessity and excessive hunger or simply without noticing, may not again eat with the other *doro* men until he has been purified. He may not even light his pipe at a fire at which *doro* meat is being cooked, but must fetch a light from another place, if he has no matches. For the rite of purification a friend must give him a young lamb, which he slaughters himself. The blood of the lamb is then boiled and handed to him by his friend; if he cannot drink it all, the remainder must be buried in the ground. Next he washes himself with the contents of the stomach, and then he and his friend consume the flesh of the lamb. After this meal he may once more eat together with the other men. Anybody sinning for the third time in breaking these taboos, adds Olpp, is cast altogether out of the company of the *doro* men; but no indication is given as to his future lot.

Andersson also mentions the taboo on hare's flesh, adding that it is forbidden even to come into contact with a fire on which a hare has been cooked. If a man breaks the rule, he is not infrequently banished from the kraal, but on the payment of a fine may be readmitted to the community.[1] Another obligation, mentioned by Albrecht, is that grown-up men must refrain from milking a cow,

[1] *Lake Ngami*, 328–9; cf. Wilms, op. cit., 118.

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since this is beneath their dignity, and anyone "who condescends to perform this part of the domestic tasks" would be expelled from the company of the men.[1]

It will be noticed that among both the Cape Hottentots and the Naman the essential feature of the boys' initiation rites seems to be the fact that it gives him the privilege and right of henceforth associating on equal terms with the mature men of the community. This privilege is apparently of some significance, for we find that whoever violates any of the customary norms of conduct is not permitted to mix again freely in the company of the men until he has been purified. This exclusion may perhaps be due to the ritual impurity in which the man finds himself, and which will make it dangerous for him to associate with the others. At the same time it suggests that the *doro* men form a distinct social group within the community; and Kolb's general statement that men and women among the Cape Hottentots habitually ate apart is of some value in this connection, as lending support to the possibility that there was in Hottentot life a well-defined alignment of the community with the men on the one side, and the women and children, including uninitiated boys, on the other. But on this point we have not nearly enough concrete information.

It is worth noting also that these rites are fundamentally different from the corresponding ones among the Bushmen. In both cases, it is true, we have seclusion, and the form of bodily mutilation is scarification; but even the nature and purpose of the scarification, as Mrs. Hoernlé's general analysis of the Hottentot rites shows, are markedly different, while the place of seclusion also differs. The Bushman boys, again, are initiated in groups, the rites are intimately connected with hunting, and they also serve to introduce the boys to the tribal religious mysteries. The Hottentot boys, on the other hand, are initiated individually, and the rites do not appear to have any connection with either hunting or religious mysteries. The moral rules and the food restrictions imposed upon the boys cannot be regarded in the same light as the revelation of *Huwe* to the Bushman boys. The Hottentots, as we shall see, also believe in supernatural beings, somewhat similar in nature even to those of the Bushmen, but there is nothing at all to indicate that these beings are revealed to the boys at initiation.

The Hottentot puberty rites for girls also differ considerably

[1] "Beobachtungen im Gross-Namalande," 224.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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233 morning and evening milking. The bigger lambs, weaned by rubbing the udders of the mother with dung, go with the flock, and so do the rams.

231 The goat is nowadays the principal source of milk supply to the
262 poorer Hottentots, and is also the principal slaughter animal. In both respects it has quite superseded the sheep, which is now of little
[281] importance in Hottentot life. Its milk is rarely used, while its wool is valued only in the skin, used largely for making karosses. Its meat, however, is preferred to that of the goat, the fat of the tail being particularly relished.[1] It is interesting to note that the goat is never used in ceremonial meals, if it can possibly be avoided. This in all probability, suggests Mrs. Hoernlé, is due to the fact that it is not one of the original domestic animals of the Hottentots.[2]

231 The value placed upon their domestic animals by the Hottentots is reflected in the ceremonial life of the people. We have already noted, for example, how in the remarriage ceremonies the bridegroom, after his seclusion, must sprinkle the cattle and sheep with water before he is again allowed to go among them as usual; how menstruating women and others in the condition of */nau* must abstain from milking, and afterwards be ceremonially reintroduced to it; and how girls passing through the puberty rites are conducted round the kraal in order to touch the male animals and confer potency upon them. In all these and similar rites we see the expression of the belief that the well-being of the stock depends upon healthy conditions being maintained in the community. Any breach with the traditions of the past, any toleration of slackness in carrying out the restrictions established for all contingencies in the life of the people, is bound
[783] to affect the stock adversely. Great care then is taken to keep all pollution from the cattle kraal, and the animals are included in any lustrations or other purification ceremonies that take place. We
[782] have also noted the use of female cattle and sheep in the important sacramental meals of the people, and there are in addition, as we shall see, certain occasions on which such animals are sacrificed directly to the tribal deities.

231 Kolb further describes two ceremonies among the Cape Hottentots
782 specially connected with the live-stock.[3] The one takes place when the sheep are seized with distemper. As soon as the outbreak is noted, one of the old men is specially selected to slaughter a healthy sheep every day for three days in succession. The meat of this

[1] Schultze, op. cit., 162–4. [2] "The Conception of Sin," 73. [3] Op. cit., 62–3.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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628 in case of accidental death the relatives of the deceased would demand compensation in cattle. The murderer also had to slaughter a cow for a purification meal to which he invited his relatives and friends [783] and those of the deceased. He himself was not allowed to eat of the meat, which was consumed by the guests, but was smeared with the blood as a sign of expiation. Von Burgsdorff (Kohler's informant) says, on the other hand, that the blood feud was exercised even when the death was accidental, and that the deed could in no way be compounded. Deliberate murder always provoked blood vengeance. The nearest male relative of the dead man had to seek out the murderer and kill him. If the murderer himself could not be got at, one of his clansmen, preferably a close relative, could be killed in his stead. If the avenger fell in the fight, his next relative had to carry on the feud; while if there were no close relative to avenge the murdered man, his clansmen would feel it an obligation to do so. The formal trial and punishment of a murderer by the tribal council is probably an institution of later days, but we have not enough information about the blood feud to determine the exact relation between these two forms of dealing with homicide.

Inter-Tribal Relations

Tribal Seniority

619 It has already been shown, in the course of our discussion, that
621 the nomadic pastoral life of the Hottentots, conditioned by the need of grass and water for their herds, compelled them to live and move in compact, often widely-separated communities. As soon as any group became so large that permanent cohesion and common movement proved impossible or even inconvenient, a swarm was of necessity thrown off, which moved to a distance in order to acquire a new pasture of sufficient extent for its use. In this way, for example, the members of a Nama tribe would become scattered over the country in smaller groups, each consisting of a clan or of some part of a clan. Such an offshoot might continue to regard itself at first as part of the parent tribe, but as it gradually increased in numbers and strength it would tend to claim independence and ultimately win acknowledgment as a separate tribe.

619 Thus, as we have seen, the seven principal tribes of the indigenous
648 Naman of South-West Africa are all traditionally descended from one line of ancestors, although in spite of this claim to a common ancestry the tribes have for a long time been independent of one

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1938
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His whole account, indeed, leaves much to be desired. Its main points of interest, perhaps, are the usages preliminary to burial, the purification ceremony afterwards and the funeral feast, and the abandonment of the locality. The description of the funeral itself is very sketchy, and unfortunately no other writer gives further details.

The series of rites connected with death and burial among the Namas have been more fully described,[1] but as found at present they have undergone some disintegration. "They have been telescoped, as it were, into one another," says Mrs. Hoernlé, "so that often enough as many of them as remain are all carried out on the same day, after the burial." These rites fall into the category of those associated with the conception of /nau, and in them the sacramental meal and the cleansing are still of importance. After a death not only the immediate relatives are affected, but also the larger family circle of the deceased. If it is a husband who has died, the wife becomes /nau, but his relatives—brothers, sisters, parents—also have to perform certain special rites before the ceremonial meal, and in a lesser degree all members of the kraal who take part in the proceedings. Similarly, if a woman dies her husband becomes /nau, while her own blood relatives perform certain other rites; and when a child has died both parents become /nau and have to undergo the usual rites associated with this condition.

As soon as a death has taken place, the body of the person is prepared for burial. Formerly according to a description given by Schoppmann, the hands were crossed over the breast, and the head bent forward between the legs, which were sharply folded at the knee. The body was then fastened together and wrapped in skins.[3] Hahn adds that before the body was wrapped up in this way or sewn up in skins, the son of the dead man first killed a goat and smeared the body of his father with the blood[4]—a practice not mentioned by other writers. Nowadays the eyes of the dead person are closed, then the body is washed by old women, and stretched flat on its back; the arms lie along the sides, and the hands, palm downward, are folded

[1] The principal authorities are: Schultze, op. cit., 316-17; Rüdin and Eling, "The Funeral Ceremonies of the Hottentots," *Trans. R. Soc. S. Afr.*, 8 (1919), 119-31; Hoernlé, "The Conception of Sin," 79-81; cf. also Alberstein, "Religionsbegriffe der Ganse-Namakwa," 107; Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 111; Schinz, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, 99-100; von Francois, *Nama und Damara*, 216.

[2] Op. cit., 79.

[3] "Beerdigung von Kommandodraft," in Meinke, op. cit., 1906, 144.

[4] Loc. cit.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1939
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It may be obtained here that the removal of the kraal from the place of death, as mentioned by Kolb and the other writers on the Cape Hottentots, does not now take place among the Namas. Some of Mrs. Hoernlé's informants stated that in the early days of their recollection the hut of the dead person was always moved to some other part of the camp,[1] whereas nowadays the hut as a rule is not moved at all; and this latter point Mrs. Hoernlé was able to confirm from personal observation.

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The widow takes no part in the rites just described—"she doesn't belong to the man's family," said one of Mrs. Hoernlé's informants indignantly in reply to a question. But from the moment the death has taken place she has become /nau, and must observe the restrictions attendant upon this condition. How long she remains /nau Mrs. Hoernlé could not ascertain. According to some informants, several days may elapse between the burial and the final cleansing, while on the other hand the cleansing is often done immediately after the burial. During the interval, whether it is long or short, the widow must not touch uncooked meat or cold water, go among the cattle, or handle the pots. She is tended by one or more elderly widows, not relatives of either man or wife, who take her through the purification rites when the time comes. First she is thoroughly cleansed from head to foot with moist cowdung, then her whole body is rubbed with a mixture of fat and red mineral powder, and the hair is cut from the top of her head. In cutting off a bit of her hair, they spit on the end of it, and say, "The next husband you get must be a lucky one, and get him quickly." She also puts on a complete set of new clothes. All this time there is a pot on the fire in the hut with a small piece of meat in it which the old woman has fetched from the cooking pots. She takes some of the black from this pot, and puts a mark under each eye, "so that everything the widow meets may be nice to her," and also on the chest, "so that her food may go down nicely." The meat in the pot is eaten by the old woman. The hair cut off is mixed with the ash of the fire, and the whole then removed from the hut and a fresh fire made. The next morning the widow takes the contents of the animal's stomach, and together with the old woman, who goes in front, scatters them over the cattle kraals, saying "let there be plenty of milk". Then follows the milking of a cow, the fetching of wood, and finally the reintroduction to water, all as in the case of the girls' puberty ceremony.

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[1] Cf. Shaw, *Report of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society*, 1821, p. lxxviii; Schultze, op. cit., 227.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
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If it is a woman who has died, the treatment of the widower is much the same, save for a few additional details. After he has been cleansed, two cuts are made on his forehead, and the juice of a certain astringent plant, *//ubus*, is rubbed in. The hair is also cut from the back of his head. In the old days the cutting in both cases was done with a sharp piece of quartz. Before he has been finally cleansed in this way the widower must not leave the hut. After the hut has also been cleaned by the removal of the fire, etc., some tamarisk and acacia branches are soaked in water over night. Next morning the widower and his attendant go out among the cattle and sheep, and sprinkle them with this water, just as in the re-marriage ceremonies. With this act the immediate mourning rites come to an end. There is no mention of any subsequent rites, or of any further mourning ceremonies.

Beliefs Concerning the Dead

778 The Hottentot beliefs concerning the fate of the dead have not been investigated in sufficient detail; and concrete information on the subject is contained only in a few fragmentary, but nevertheless important, observations. These leave untouched many problems which arise, and the following description cannot, therefore, be regarded as fully adequate. But it seems safe to say, in the light of the available information, that the Hottentots have no definite conception of an after-world or special land of the dead, nor is there any established theory of reincarnation. Olpp in a short sentence expresses concisely what appears to be the general Hottentot doctrine: "They believe that the soul of a dead person goes with him into the grave, from which it has the faculty of emerging at will as a ghost, in either luminous or terrifying form."[1]

775 192 This statement can be amplified somewhat. The ghosts of the dead are known to the Naman by several names—most commonly as */hai /nun*, "fawn feet"; sometimes as */hai khoin*, "fawn-coloured people," or *sobo khoin*, "people of the shadow"; and also as *//gounagu*.[2] This last term is of special importance. It is the masculine plural form of *//Gounab*, and *//Gounab* is one of the outstanding figures in Hottentot religion and myth, just as he is in the religion of the Northern Bushmen. The term *//gounab* itself may be used in the singular for "ghost", as appears from a saying noted by

[1] *Among Primitive Peoples*, 39.
[2] Hahn, *Tsuni-//Goam*, 83, 149; Hoernlé, "Social Value of Water among the Nama," 517, 519.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1938
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The early writers speak of sore breasts, ophthalmias, and umbilical hernias as the common diseases, and coughs appear to have been frequent. After the advent of the white man, smallpox, measles and less cleanly diseases swept the country like plagues. An epidemic of smallpox in 1713 totally wiped out many of the Cape Hottentot groups, and greatly weakened the numerical strength and organization of others; a similar outbreak in 1755 again decimated them, and to add to their woes leprosy attacked them; while in 1864 large numbers of Naman died from smallpox. At the present time, syphilis, another infection due to the white man, is widespread among them; tuberculosis, fevers, paralysis, ophthalmias, and chicken-pox are other common diseases, while during the cold season they catch severe colds, and, like all the other inhabitants of South Africa, they suffered heavily in the influenza pandemic of 1918.[1]

All maladies, says Mrs. Hoernlé,[2] are divided by the Hottentots into two groups. First there is */aisena*, "sickness," which they regard as due to some misplacement of the internal organs. According to their notions of anatomy these organs have weird ways of wandering about the body. The treatment is massage, to restore each organ to its proper place; and in such massage the Hottentots are very highly skilled. The other group of diseases is called by the same name as death, *tsi*, and in the treatment of these a great variety of herbs and roots is employed. Some of the herbs are considered so valuable that journeys are made from tribe to tribe to get them, although among the herbs found in any particular territory there are always some which may serve as substitutes. But however powerful the remedy may be, if it is to be effective it must always be applied by someone who has had the disease and recovered. The most effective medicine will fail unless used by the right person.[3]

The principal diseases described to Mrs. Hoernlé as receiving this latter treatment are *//aunas*, paralysis, *//kais*, "fever," *!urub*, varicose veins, and */aunis*, lupus. Any man falling sick from any one of these or the other diseases called *tsi* becomes */aun*, and the treatment adopted to restore him to [illegible] is that described in the remarriage ceremony. The patient is secluded in a hut, and

[1] Laidler, "The Magic Medicine of the Hottentots," 433; Theal, *History of S. Africa before 1795*, ii, 431 ff., iii, 98, 316 ff.; Moffat, "Kranklosness . . . the Namas," 870; Schapera, op. cit., 99; [illegible] 8 complete, op. cit., 219–26; Schultze, op. cit., 227; *Official Year Book of the Union*, No. 6, 984–6 passim.

[2] "Conception of Insanity among the Hottentots," 77–9.

[3] Cf. Schultze, op. cit., 213.

a special animal, a sheep or a goat, is slaughtered. The officiating person makes some cuts in the patient's body over the part affected. With a small horn he cups blood from these cuts, mixes it together, and adds some of the blood of the slaughtered animal. Next he scrapes some dirt from his arm and mixes it with the blood, to which he also adds the ingredients of the vegetable medicines. This mixture he finally rubs into the cuts. Till these have healed the patient must observe the customary */nau* restrictions: he must remain in the hut, he must not touch anyone with his hands, nor must he touch cold water or the pots. When at last the cuts are healed, the officiating person cleanses him in the customary manner, he puts on a set of new clothes and gives the old ones to his attendant, the usual purification meal is held, and the fire in the hut cleared away and renewed. Finally the reintroduction to the duties of ordinary life takes place in the usual manner, and the patient is free to mix with other people once more.

No other writer on the Hottentots mentions this particular grouping of diseases. It is implied, however, in Laidler's statement that there is a classification into minor and major troubles; but he adds that the former are treated by the herbalists, while in the latter the first step is consultation with the "witch doctor" (i.e. the */gui aob*) who is usually himself also a herbalist.[1] He makes no reference to the fact, explicitly noted by both Mrs. Hoernlé and Schultze, that certain diseases can only be treated by people who have themselves had the disease and recovered from it. Many writers, as we have seen, corroborate the calling in of the */gui aob* in case of illness, and it would seem that one of his ordinary duties is to discover the source of the sickness. His method of doing so is nowhere clearly described, although Laidler vaguely mentions divination by examination of the entrails of a slaughtered animal. Where the patient is held to have been bewitched, the */gui aob* also undertakes to cure him. His treatment in such cases, in addition to the "extracting" of the foreign bodies thought to be causing the illness, is apparently similar to that employed in the diseases known as *//ap*, since, as we have seen, the dirt scraped from his body is an essential ingredient in any medicine he gives. It is obvious, from what has just been noted, that he does not undertake the treatment of every kind of disease.

All this implies that more than one class of persons may be called in to treat the sick and injured, the healer differing according to

[1] Op. cit., 423, 434.

3: Hoevell E-5 (1912-1913) 1918 FX13 Hottentot FX13
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nations. Cornelius Goliath was chief of the Berseba Hottentots, a very capable man 115
who had kept his people out of the war with the Germans, and had therefore been allowed
to preserve his tribe and its lands intact. He spoke excellent German, and was much
impressed with the necessity of absorbing as much of the incoming culture as would enable
his people to be at less disadvantage in the common concerns of life. He was there-
fore not much use as an original contributor, but was invaluable as a check on the state-
ments of others. During many weeks he had supper with me each evening, and spoke
willingly of what he knew.

Common characteristics of all transition rites among the Hottentots. All periods of 796
crisis in the lives of the Hottentots, whether of individuals or of groups, afford admir-
able illustrations of those rites which A. van Gennep has called "rites de passage."
There is always the separation of the person from his usual surroundings, his prepa-
ration for a new group in society, and, finally, his reception into this group. A per-
son in such a crisis acquires a characteristic unknown in the group to which he has
hitherto belonged. He is no longer protected by any group solidarity, and is therefore
exposed to danger on every side. He must retire from contact with other people, and
remain.[1] But he is also a danger to other people, and more especially to the animals and
other living things on which the community depends for its livelihood. Hence his seclu- [783]
sion and his scrupulous abstention from his usual tasks. Such a person is said to be
unclean. It is essential that he be initiated, as it were, with the least possible delay, into that
group of his people which already possesses the new characteristic which he has acquired,
in order that he may have a normal place in the community once more. But here there
is a difficulty, for a lone person may work untold mischief on anyone dealing with him,
he might also become lame. Therefore only persons who have passed through all the 796
crises and strains of human life and no longer fear anything, who are beyond good and 888
evil, one might almost say, are qualified to deal with such cases. None but very old men,
and women past the age of childbearing, satisfy this condition. They alone can be called
upon to restore the lone person to the community. But not any old woman or old man
will do. It must be one who has the same characteristic as the lone person. Only a
widowed person can safely deal with one bane by recent loss of wife or husband. Only
one who has had a given disease and been cured of it is fit to officiate for a sufferer from
such disease. Preferably someone is selected for this task who, besides the other necessary
qualifications, has had an extremely bad attack of the disease, the worse the better.

Institution or separation of some kind occurs in all cases, but the method of initiation, 796
we may call it so, varies according as the crisis is one of two kinds. In childbirth,

[1] "Take care of himself", in this special way. The word is used only in this connection, both of the individual
himself and of others who, knowing they may be a source of danger to him, are considerate on his behalf.

716 marriage, puberty, or bereavement rites, the new status has simply to be recognised, acknowledged, and the necessary steps taken to protect both the individual and society by resolving the man or the woman into the new group to which he or she now belongs. This is done by the preparation of a sacramental meal[1] in which only persons duly qualified are allowed to share. In the other group of crises, a stage preliminary to the sacramental meal is necessary. The taau person has first to be identified with the new group by injecting some of the 'amaxoo' of that group into him. This is done by making incisions in some part of his body, the part varying with the crisis, and injecting a concoction of which one ingredient is invariably some of the grease and dirt scraped from the body of the officiating person. This is the practice in remarriage, in the puberty ceremonies of the boys, in the reception into the rank of hunters, in the treatment of diseases which are regarded as taau, etc. For diseases the injection of the amaxoo seems almost like the administration of an antitoxin. The next stage in both groups of crises is the renunciation of all that represents the old life, after a period, more or less prolonged, of complete seclusion. The individual must be reborn. There is a special cleansing[2] of the taau person's body by the individual officiating, after which a totally new set of clothing is put on. The old clothes should be used only by the officiating person or someone else of the same group, though the tendency nowadays is to keep most of them for rough use. At the same time the house is thoroughly purified, and what might be called an "expiatory" meal is eaten. For this meal but one animal is killed, and of it none but the taau person and persons who can no longer become taau may partake. Finally there is the careful reintroduction to all the familiar daily tasks which have been so long laid aside, and so life begins again with all the solidarity of the new group behind its new member.

[755]

783 555 Some details concerning the state of taau. It has already been mentioned that there are certain people who are immune from all the dangers attaching to taau. This is of extreme importance, as it prevents the life of the community from being paralysed by fear of the dread consequences of tampering with an unknown and overwhelmingly great power. It might also be expected that this privileged class would have great authority in its hands, and, there is every evidence that in the early days the older people in the tribe did have an exceedingly strong and important position, and this notwithstanding the well known fact that old people were exposed by the Hottentots. Even nowadays I observed that an old person keeps his power as long as he keeps his vigour and his judgment, though he is likely to have a sad life if times be hard and he is rather a burden than a help to the family.

I have observed only one instance in which animals, and only in which inanimate

[1] Cf. p. [illegible]. [2] For such a cleansing the word //oaxa is used.

3: Hoernlé E-5 (1912-1913) 1918 FX13 Hottentot FX13
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things, become !nau without some individual or group of individuals being !nau. This 783 888
is when an animal is struck by lightning. A sheep so struck is very highly !nau and none but the very old will touch it. They cook and eat it and make use of the skin. When [262]
one realizes that the Hottentots will eat any meat however high, and any animal even though it has died of disease, one realizes how strongly this !nau influence works in making them afraid to touch an animal killed by lightning.

As soon, however, as some person becomes !nau certain things also become !nau. 783
First of all the fire in the hut in which he is secluded is !nau. It must never be allowed to go out, nor must the ashes be removed until the day comes for the purification of the house and the renewal of the fire. During all this time nothing must be cooked at the fire, and no one who might increase the peril in which the !nau person finds himself must come near it. Thus pregnant or menstruating women are always excluded. All these precautions seem to show that it is the patient's safety that is bound up with the fire. The !nau fire must be reported, not because other people may suffer from the breach of the regulations, but because the patient will suffer therefrom. In this connection it may be noted that the Hottentot hut is peculiarly private and can be used as a sanctuary. The hearth is therefore most intimately bound up with the inmates of the hut.

Raw meat and cold water are sources of great danger to a !nau person, and must be 783
kept away from him. All my informers denied that water ever became !nau, but every 778
!nau person has to be carefully protected from it, and reintroduced to it with much ceremony once the period of seclusion is over. I have a good many facts which show that water is endowed with a peculiar potency by the Hottentots, which is perhaps not wonderful if one considers how valuable a thing it is in their extremely arid country. One instance may suffice to show its powers. The Hottentot witch doctor, or *!ghi-dop*, never touches [791]
cold water, and never washes from year's end to year's end. His power resides, as it were, in the dirt which clings to his body, and this is always an ingredient in any medicine he gives. Should he touch water this power would be diminished, and complete immersion in water would cause the disappearance of all his potency. The chief Christian Goliath gave me an account of such a happening at Bersaba in the time of his grandfather, when [683]
a *!ghi-dop* who had been using his power for evil was ducked in the pond by the chief's orders, and pushed under again as his head appeared above water. Thereafter his evil powers were gone.

The clothing and utensils of the patient also become !nau, but these are a source of 783
danger to others than himself. Their's is the peril if they inadvertently make use of them before he finally discards them and gives them to the person taking care of him. An instance was given me of a woman who brought her husband to death's door by striking him with her *!gha*, or petticoat, when she was !nau.

3: Hoernlé E-5 (1912-1913) 1918 FX13 Hottentot FX13
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881 with her too. First a visit is paid to the cattle kraal where sáp is strewn on all the male animals, also on the trees and bushes which they pass by. This was great luck, said one old man to me, and the day after such a girl had come out of her hut it was sure to rain and there would be plenty in the land; "now the white men have come, the rain has ceased, and the people are miserable." Then a cow is milked with the help of the old woman. If possible this is a young cow calving for the first time. The old woman supports the girl's arm while she milks. This milk is !nau, to be drunk only by the old woman herself or others of her age. Once this milking has taken place, the girl can resume her milking duties with impunity. Next a visit is made to the spring. The girl carries her water pot, (*//ko-ás*) on her head. Arrived at the spring, the woman with a branch from a tree strikes the water, scattering it over the girl. She then rubs the girl's legs and arms with clay (*≠goáb*), fills the pot, and places it on the girl's head. The girl is then free to draw water as she pleases.

Hahn[18] states that when the relatives appear for the feast at the end of the seclusion, her nearest male relative (usually the eldest unmarried cousin) takes the fat of the heifer which has been killed, hangs it over her head, and wishes that she may be as fruitful as a young cow and have many children. The other friends repeat the wish. Further,[19] [842] the girls who have come of age must after the festival run about in the first thunderstorm quite naked, so that the rain pours down and washes the whole body. The belief is that this causes them to be fruitful and have many children. He says he has on three occasions witnessed this running in the thunder rain when the roaring of the thunder was deafening and the whole sky appeared to be one continual flash of lightning.

881 783 When men are giving an account of this puberty ceremony for women, the chief thing they lay stress on is the */nau dáip*, i. e., the milk obtained from the first milking by the girl who has just come out of the khart óms. Indeed, it was in this context that I first lit on the word !nau and all it means. Gottlief had been describing the ceremony from his point of view, and when he mentioned the !nau dáip and the serious consequences which would follow if any man were inadvertently to drink it, I asked him what !nau meant and he burst out: "What is absent from this !nau? Everything is !nau, or used to be; warriors returning from a battle were !nau, a sick man is !nau, a widow," etc. etc.

783 Should anyone infringe any of the !nau injunctions during these puberty rites, some sort of sexual disease would beset him, and this could only be prevented from proving fatal, if he were able to persuade the abé tarás to inoculate and so free him. The method of this inoculation, which is much the same wherever it occurs, will be fully described in the next section.

[18] T. Hahn, loc. cit. [19] Cf. Idem, Tsuni //Goam, p. 87.

3: Hoernlé E-5 (1912-1913) 1918 FX13 Hottentot FX13
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Hannah said none of the people who had treated him so far had had the disease badly enough, hence all the attempted cures had failed. It is interesting to note here that this !nomi hêip has to be treated with great deference. It is the root, which is astringent, (somewhat like ginger), which is used. When a person comes to the bush, before digging he must put down a bracelet, or a bead, or some little thing. If he fails to do so, the root will simply disappear. Later, if he divides it among his friends, the same process takes place; each must give some little thing for the piece received. I was warned to do the same when I received a piece lest all the virtue leave the root, even if it did not itself wholly disappear.

However it may be with the 'sacramental' meal, the purification meal certainly takes place when the fire is cleaned away and renewed. The reintroduction to the duties of life also takes place in the usual manner.

Peter Kolben, writing at the beginning of the 18th century, states that "if a Hottentot, man or woman, recovers of a dangerous sickness, 'andersmaken' is performed by killing, for the entertainment of the kraal, a head of great or small cattle, according to the circumstances of the family"[2]. This may be a feast similar to the one in which all partake when the ǂaxais leaves her kharú ǂns.

The purification of the survivors after a death. The series of rites connected with death have perhaps undergone more disintegration than any of the others described. They have been telescoped, as it were, into one another, so that often enough as many of them as remain are all carried out on the same day, after the burial is over. The old writers, of whom Kolben is the earliest and the most detailed on this point, state quite definitely that the hut of a deceased person was left standing with all the belongings, and that the camp or kraal was moved. My informers state that in the earlier days of their recollection the hut was always moved to some other part of the camp, whereas nowadays the hut as a rule is not moved at all. Several deaths occurred while I was at Walfish Bay, and one while I was in Berseba, and in none of these cases was the hut moved. Yet where an animal is to be had the feast takes place, and in any case the cleansing is done even now. After a death not only the immediate relatives are affected, but also the larger family circle, and there are interesting things to note in each case. If it is a husband who has died, the wife becomes !nau, but his relatives, brothers, sisters, parents, have also to perform certain rites before the ceremonial meal, and in a lesser degree all members of the kraal who take part in the proceedings. It will be as well to describe these purification rites before attending to the widow.

When the people come back from the grave, they all wash their hands in cold water

[2] Kolben's Hottentots. A translation from the High German by Medley, London, 1738, p. 213. (The High German version is itself a translation of P. Kolbe, Caput Bonae Spei hodiernum, Norimberg, 1719).